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**The Missions of California and The Old Southwest. By Jesse S.**

**Hildrup.** ix and 100 pp., 35 Illustrations from Photographs. A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago, 1907.

This is the story, briefly told, of the old missions in California and the western wilderness, where the Catholic fathers gave their pure and unselfish labours to the amelioration of the moral and social condition of the Indians. The missions had their round of struggle, triumph and decline, and, as the author says, "millions of men have both rejoiced and mourned over the bright career of the fathers and its fatal ending." The author writes of the old padres, the humane work they advanced so far and the rich properties which they created through toil, privation, and danger.

It was in 1833 that the Mexican Government passed the order of confiscation. The religion and morals of the missions were swept away, the Indian neophytes fled to the mountains and their short-lived civilization disappeared forever. The Mission buildings are still the monuments of the work. Some of them are little more than heaps of ruins, while others are in an admirable state of preservation. Many large photographs show the great buildings or the heaps of ruins.

**America's Insular Possessions. By C. H. Forbes-Lindsay.** Two

volumes. vi and 551 pp., and ix and 566 pp., many Illustrations, and Indices.

The John C. Winston Co., Philadelphia, 1906.

A successful compilation of facts relating to our insular possessions which should be at the command of all intelligent citizens. The work is well done, and may be commended with confidence as a compendium of accurate information presented in a readable style—an authoritative, popular book on the subject. The author has made careful use of the best data, and the facts are interestingly set forth.

Ample space is assigned to each possession for adequate though concise treatment of it. The introductory chapter gives an historical account of Cuba, Porto Rico, Haiti, and Jamaica which is justified by our intimate relations with the alien islands of the Greater Antilles and their historical and commercial connection with Porto Rico. Porto Rico has 118 pages, Guam 78, Hawaii 99, and the Isthmus of Panama and Canal Project 214. The entire second volume is given to the Philippines. The geographical treatment is accurate, but would have been more scientific if based upon the geology of the islands. This might have been done without impairing the readability of the text. The book should have been supplied with good maps. A work dealing so largely with geography should not compel its readers to go outside for essential map material. The only maps are one of the Panama canal and a poor little sketch of Guam which does not indicate some of the important geographical names in the text. Of the five towns mentioned as the termini of the few good roads the position of two is not shown. The photogravures are excellent.

**Notes upon the Island of Dominica. By Symington Grieve.** 126 pp.,

17 Illustrations, Map, Appendix and Index. Adam & Charles Black, London, 1906. (Price, 2s. 6d.)

This little island seems to be one of the least hackneyed and familiar bits of land in the West Indies. The author went there, last year, to study its flora and fauna. He found that the interior of Dominica, which is only about

30 miles long and 16 miles wide, is almost unknown, for it is covered with dense forest. To the surprise of the officials, the explorer and his party cut their way across the island with the aid of machetes, and really saw much of the country.

The map in the book has been brought down to date as far as possible, but Mr. Grieve says it is quite unreliable in many of its details. And no wonder; for it is based upon Byre's map, which was published in 1776! The revised map gives, however, a fair idea of the roads and the position of the new plantations. The author treats at length of the present condition of the island, the cost of bringing the crown lands into cultivation, etc. He describes the volcanic phenomena, the boiling springs, and other wonders of nature, and says that if hotels were built, paths cut, and other conveniences provided, Dominica ought to attract many tourists.

**La Route du Simplon. Par Frédéric Barbey.** Illustrations de Fred. Boissonnas. Édité par "Atar," S. A., Genève, 1906. 4to.

The preface to this beautiful book opens with an apology. "A whole book consecrated to the history of a road?—This is exaggerated, some will say. But when that road is called the Simplon, when the man who conceived the idea of it is found to have been Napoleon I, when, finally, by a curious coincidence, a hundred years have elapsed from the day the first coaches crossed the mountain at a rapid gait to the day when, from Brig to Iselle, through the tunnel laboriously constructed, the whistle of the first locomotives was heard, it would have been deplorable had the past and the existence of those pioneers, zealous and active servants of an imperious master, not been recalled to memory."—And, well may we add, it would have been a great pity if the present book, so interesting, so valuable and beautiful, had not been written.

It is a great pleasure to read such plain and yet admirable French. Terse, clear, and devoid of superfluous ecstasy to which Alpine landscape so easily tempts. Truly, the splendid illustrations with which Mr. Boissonnas has adorned the text render many descriptions unnecessary. And, besides, the Simplon is comparatively mild in natural grandeur. Situated almost midway between the stupendous wildness of the Grimsel and the cleft through which one penetrates to the backbone of the Valaisan Alps, entering at Visp and halting at Zermatt, surrounded by the sharply individualized summits of Monte Rosa, the Matterhorn, the Weisshorn and the Mischabel group, the Simplon pass shrinks to second rank in impressiveness, notwithstanding the mass of the Fletschhorn and Monte Leone. There is little occasion for enthusiasm except on the Italian side, where the sinister gorge of Gondo, the lovely vale of Domo d'Ossola and the shores of Lago Maggiore offer particular attractions.

The work is préeminently historical, the tale of the development of the Simplon as an Alpine thoroughfare, from the earliest times of Roman expansion. Previous to that epoch no data exist, although there are some who suggest that the "last of the Helvetians," after the awful devastations under Commodus (180-193 A. D.), partly took refuge in the Valais. That the Romans used the Simplon extensively is proved by numerous finds of coins, and the tradition concerning a fortified tower (Planum castellum) on the old path from Italy into Switzerland. The Roman trails did not follow the line of the present road. Instead of keeping in the beds of mountain torrents, they rose to slopes exposed